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Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Department of Transitional Assistance

MARYLOU SUDDERS
Secretary

KARYN POLITO
Lieutenant Governor

JEFF McCUE
Commissioner

Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA)
WORCESTER ADVISORY BOARD
Meeting Minutes:

Date: January 11, 2017
Time: 9:30 - 11:00 a.m.
Place: Friendly House
36 Wall Street
Worcester, MA 01604

The meeting was called to order at 9:37 a. m. by Isabel Gonzalez-Webster, Board Co-Chair.

Isabel Gonzalez-Webster Board Co-Chair, facilitated the meeting.

Attendance was taken. A quorum was not present.

Members of Board Present:

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Anne Bureau, Isabel Gonzalez-Webster, Gordon Hargrove, Charla Hixon, Olga Lopez-Hill, Jean McMurray, Josefina Velez,

Members of Board Absent:

Robin Hooper, Lilian Cueva-Dina, Weayonnoh Nelson- Davies, Kim Dion, Donna Avery Cohen, Olta Kodra, Amanda Riik, Maria Infante

Members of DTA Present:

Kristin Baskowski, Lori Jacques, Melissa Pullin

Members of the Public Present:

Melissa Daley

Summary of discussions held on each topic on the agenda:

Welcome/Introductions:

- Approval of 9-14-16 Meeting Minutes
- postponed until next meeting – no quorum present

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- Note taker for this meeting: Isabel Gonzalez-Webster

DTA TAO Director Updates:

Lori Jacques, Director, Worcester TAO provided the following information:

Local TAO Updates:

Staffing:

- 5 New Hires at Local office
- Caseload numbers on Mass.gov

Activities at the Location:

- Scanning of documents
- Metal detectors
- DTA Connect Phase 2

DTA-Statewide Updates:

- caseload report available by zip code

Guest Speaker:

Carlton A. Watson

Director of Family and Resident Services

Worcester Housing Authority

Family Self Sufficiency Program – state subsidized, no applicable to federal government. State has grant requirement for school work

Federal FBS Program: self-sufficiency: Section 8 or federal public housing Transition housing program – DHCD – accepting families from shelter – lease up with housing authority... has to have some capacity for income During 9 month in program they save up for their 1st, last and security deposit.

With ABL, FSS, THP there is a Triage program where Worcester housing helps residents put tougher resumes, provides child care, job skills, interview skills, help pay for test etc.

The goal of the program is to eliminate barriers to job readiness (there is an employment specialist)
Program eliminate cost for any residents enrolled in program. They are ESL programs at GBV and partnerships with QCC and WPS and life skill classes with financial and computer literacy components
Worcester housing has job readiness programs, work with employers on referrals (manufactures, health care, home health, clerical) they have placed over 100 residents in the past year

Work with residents to obtain drivers licenses and obtain ESL
600 families enrolled in all programs collectively

A better life (ABL) - is a required program - state program
admission preference – applicable to all members of the family, work school requirement now applies to 1 person in the family instead of all persons in the family. Rent is premised on income not bedroom size. Roughly 30% of income. Rent can scroll amount in increases and when they finish they can use money however they like

Emergency Housing for DV, Fire, Natural Disaster. Get bumped to the top of the list. However, placement is not immediate.

Access to Child Care is an issue for clients

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ESL – 80% Spanish speakers

A lot of undocumented folks

There are a lot of new Arabic speaking folks

Tremendous job readiness program

Door knocking everyday

Carlton Watson – 508-635-3271

Board Member Agency Updates, Announcements:

Friendly House:

MLK event coming up

Jim McGovern will be at Plumley village on Tuesday

Worcester Community Action Council:

EITC Saturday began last week

Worcester County Food Bank:

SNAP incentive Program – starting April 1st. \$20 gets put back on ebt card if 100% purchases made at csa and mobile markets – point person in Worcester is Liz Sheehan Castro

Mass EOC:

Seen over 400 People this fall for financial aid. Have a new advisor who speaks Arabic?

Worcester Community Connections Coalition and the Worcester Connections Family Resource Center:

Interested in bringing folks from Boston to Worcester to discuss the Cliff effect

Looking at summer jobs already

Fuel assistance program

Open Discussion:

- VIDA – makes appointment now
- Not enough legal help for immigrants and undocumented folks

Suggestions for Agenda Topics for Next Meeting:

- We should try to secure guest speakers from MIRA or Ascentria
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- The meeting was moved from April to March because of the busy holiday schedule.
- Next meeting date: *Wednesday, March 22, 2017, 9:30 am-11:00 am at Friendly House, 36 Wall Street, Worcester, MA 01604.*

List of documents used at meeting:

- Agenda
- Minutes

Record of any votes:

- None

The meeting was adjourned at: 11 a.m.